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Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 24 of Security Council resolution 2156 (2014), in which the Council requested that I continue to inform it of progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and to bring to its attention any serious violation of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area (S/2011/384, annex), signed on 20 June 2011. The present report provides an update on the situation in Abyei and UNISFA operations since my previous report of 23 July 2014 (S/2014/518), outlines progress made in the implementation of the additional tasks mandated to UNISFA under Council resolution 2024 (2011) related to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, and recommends, for the consideration of the Council, an additional four-month extension of the Force's mandate.

II. Security situation

2. The security situation in the Abyei area was relatively calm during the period under review, despite underlying tensions related to the presence of security elements from both parties and the political deadlock over the territory's final status.

3. Between 120 and 150 armed Sudan oil police personnel remained deployed in the Diffra oil complex in violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and multiple Security Council resolutions. UNISFA also observed the presence of small numbers of armed Sudan People's Liberation Army personnel in southern Abyei, in contravention of the Agreement and Council resolutions.

4. The presence of small and medium-sized firearms among the local communities remains an issue of serious concern. During its patrols, the mission continued to disarm individuals bearing weapons. On 22 July, UNISFA troops disarmed one Misseriya carrying an AK-47 rifle and 25 rounds of ammunition. Two incidents involving gunfire were also reported during the period under review. On the evening of 27 July, UNISFA troops heard gunshots in Awelnuum village, in southern Abyei. After visiting the area and interacting with the local population, UNISFA was not able to identify the source of the gunfire. On the night of 29 July,

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two rounds of gunshots were heard in the vicinity of Abyei town, but the source could likewise not be identified.

5. By mid-July, as the rainy season began north of Abyei, the Misseriya nomads completed their seasonal migration and northward movement out of the Abyei area. As at 10 September, only 5,000 Misseriya were estimated to be present in Dari, Al-Askar, Diffra, Mekines and Farouk, in northern Abyei. The Ngok Dinka population in the Abyei area remained at approximately 81,000. There was no increase in the number of internally displaced Ngok Dinka returning during the period under review.

6. On 28 July, the South Sudan MTN mobile service started functioning in the Abyei area. On 16 September, Sudanese government officials complained to UNISFA about what they deemed to be the establishment of an unauthorized telecommunication service in the Abyei area by a South Sudanese company and, thus, a violation of the sovereignty of the Sudan. The flag of South Sudan, which was hoisted in the aftermath of the Ngok Dinka unilateral community referendum in October 2013, is also still in place on the MTN tower, which is perceived by the Government of the Sudan as an unacceptable provocation. UNISFA is closely monitoring the situation to prevent any security incident around this issue.

7. UNISFA continued to implement its multifaceted conflict prevention and mitigation strategy, which consists of monitoring and early warning assessments, deployment of troops in potential flashpoint areas, robust and deterrent day and night patrols, aerial monitoring, and continuous engagement with local communities through the joint security committees and with the authorities in the Sudan and South Sudan. A total of six joint security committees remained operational during the rainy season throughout the Abyei area. With the arrival of the rainy season, the mission's military component adjusted its deployment plan to enable the provision of security and the protection of civilians in conditions of reduced mobility.

8. UNISFA police personnel continued to provide advice and support to the Head of Mission and Force Commander and the military component on issues related to law and order and protection of civilians. They also provided training and advice to unarmed and voluntary neighbourhood watch mechanisms and community protection committees on matters of law and order and coordination support to community patrols. In addition, police personnel contributed to the efforts of the military component in making the local communities aware of the need for intercommunal dialogue.

9. With the movement restrictions imposed by the rainy season, the mine clearance operations of the United Nations Mine Action Service decreased as a result of the limited capacity available to respond to any emergency explosive ordnance disposal tasks. The Service used this period to focus on operational planning in preparation for the coming dry season and the future task of supporting the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, as well as capacity-building for staff and implementing partners.

III. Political developments

10. Further to the recommendations from the recently concluded strategic review of UNISFA (see S/2014/336), which were welcomed by the Security Council in its

resolution 2156 (2014), UNISFA, the Secretariat, the African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia continued their joint engagement with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to encourage them to take concrete steps to promote the consolidation of peace and security in Abyei and resume the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011.

11. Concurrently, UNISFA undertook two initiatives towards the implementation of the recommendations from the review. In July, the mission requested the cooperation of the Government of the Sudan in conducting a joint assessment of security threats to the oil installations in Diffra. The assessment would constitute a preliminary step in developing proposals aimed at addressing the country's concerns in this regard, thereby allowing the withdrawal of their police units. In a meeting with UNISFA on 16 September, the Government of the Sudan objected to the singling out of the oil police and instead proposed a security assessment for the whole of the Abyei area. Discussions continue with the Government of the Sudan on this issue.

12. Early in August, UNISFA began engaging local communities on the need for and advantages of intercommunal dialogue with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka community groups, including traditional leaders, elders, intellectuals, women's groups, youth, traders, faith-based groups and local authorities. The awareness-raising process was carried out mainly at the battalion level, together with police personnel, and in certain instances within the framework of the joint security committees. Although the overall response was positive, both communities expressed a number of concerns to be addressed either before or during the intercommunal dialogue. Specifically, the Ngok Dinka traditional leadership expressed frustration and called upon the Misseriya to admit responsibility and provide compensation for the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief, Kuol Deng Kuol, on 4 May 2013. Some of their representatives also called upon the Misseriya to recognize the outcome of the Ngok Dinka unilateral community referendum of October 2013, in which the vast majority of that community voted for Abyei to become a part of South Sudan. The Misseriya, on the other hand, expressed concern over the extent to which that referendum could affect their ability to migrate through Abyei and gain access to sufficient water and grazing land for their livestock.

13. On 3 September, the media reported that the President of the Sudan, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, had appointed Hassan Ali Nimir al-Julla, a member of the Misseriya Humr clan, as the new Co-Chairman of the Government of the Sudan to the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee. Mr. Ali Nimir replaced Alkhair Alfaheem Almaki, who had served as Co-Chairman since 25 October 2011. On 15 September, the UNISFA Head of Mission met with Mr. Ali Nimir and his deputy to stress the crucial importance of reconvening the Committee immediately to support the mission in addressing the security challenges facing the area. The Co-Chairman reiterated his Government's commitment to the immediate resumption of the Committee's meetings, as well as to the full implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011, including the establishment of joint interim institutions. The Government of South Sudan has yet to confirm the identity of its own Co-Chairman. The previous Co-Chairman, Edward Lino, withdrew from the position following the community referendum of October 2013 and joined the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition, led by the former Vice-President, Riek Machar.

14. On 1 September, the Chairperson of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, President Thabo Mbeki, raised the need for the meetings of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee to resume with the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, urging him to appoint a new Co-Chair and resume dialogue with the Sudan on the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011. South Sudan has made no progress on these issues. The African Union Peace and Security Council noted with concern in its communiqué of 12 September that key elements of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 had not been implemented and that the delays had affected the return to normal of the life of the people of Abyei. It stressed that, without further progress, the achievements made to date would be jeopardized.

15. On 7 September, the Sudan National Election Commission announced its intention to finalize the delineation of geographical constituencies for the 2015 elections by mid-September and stated that the Abyei area would be included as one of those constituencies. In response, on 11 September the presidential spokesperson of South Sudan stated that neither party could take unilateral decisions with respect to Abyei and that the Ngok Dinka community had already voted predominantly for Abyei to become a part of South Sudan. The parties will need to address this issue, which can pose a serious risk to the stability of Abyei.

IV. Status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism

16. The aerial monitoring and verification operations of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism continued during the reporting period, following their resumption on 16 June. However, the Sudan and South Sudan have yet to resolve their dispute over the location of the centreline of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and its use to demarcate the proposed border crossings. On 20 August, following his meeting with President Mbeki in Khartoum, the Minister of Defence of the Sudan, Abdel Raheem Hussein, called for the full implementation of the security arrangements signed by the two parties and agreed to have a bilateral meeting with his counterpart in the Government of South Sudan to discuss this outstanding issue.

17. In its communiqué of 12 September, the African Union Peace and Security Council noted with concern that, with regard to the cooperation agreements of September 2012, not all elements of the border security agreements had been fully implemented, including the determination of the centreline of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone. It noted its support for the convening, as soon as possible, of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism to address all outstanding border security issues.

18. As at 10 September, UNISFA, the Sudan and South Sudan had 29, 32 and 34 monitors, respectively, in the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. On 10 August, the first group of Sudanese monitors was deployed to the sector headquarters in Gok Machar (Northern Bahr el Ghazal State, South Sudan), joining additional UNISFA and South Sudan monitors from Kadugli (Southern Kordofan State, Sudan). Of the 117 force protection troops deployed to the Mechanism, 83 remain in Kadugli and 38 in Gok Machar.

19. Three operations were conducted during the reporting period from the Mechanism's sector headquarters in Kadugli to the areas of Torakit, Wadega and

Kafia Kingi. Three operations were also conducted from Gok Machar to the area of Bebnis, the area east of the 14-mile area, and the area of Kafia Kingi. No military presence from either side was observed within the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone during the missions. On 16 September, the Government of the Sudan requested that ground patrols start in the 14-mile area as soon as possible.

20. The Mechanism remains at the initial operating capability stage, with its headquarters in Abyei and sector headquarters in Kadugli and Gok Machar operational. In Gok Machar, the mission initiated a camp expansion project, which is expected to be completed by March 2015. The delivery of additional accommodation units for the deployment of the full force protection company is expected to begin in December 2014, once road conditions improve. Contingent-owned equipment for the force protection companies has yet to be deployed in sufficient quantities. Preparations also continued for the deployment of the Mechanism to the sector headquarters in Buram and Malakal. These sector headquarters are expected to be completed by April/May 2015 (security conditions in Malakal permitting), at which time the Mechanism will reach full operational capability.

21. The United Nations Mine Action Service collaborated with the Mechanism in training the latter's personnel, including Sudan and South Sudan monitors, on patrol skills, roadblocks, ambushes, hostile crowds, hostage-taking, casualty evacuation, loss of communication, breakdown of vehicles, landmine accidents and traffic accidents. The Service maintained its patrol support teams as an emergency explosive ordnance disposal capacity in Kadugli.

V. Humanitarian situation

22. During the reporting period, humanitarian agencies continued to provide assistance in the following sectors: food security and livelihoods; health and nutrition; education; protection, including child protection; non-food items/shelter; and water, sanitation and hygiene. Assistance included the provision of food rations, packages of non-food items, nutritional screening and treatment of children and pregnant and lactating women, access to education, including access to water, sanitation and hygiene in schools, capacity development, protection monitoring, advocacy, family tracing and reunification, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene promotion services. With the facilitation of UNISFA, the World Food Programme office in the Sudan carried out a rapid nutrition and food security assessment of the Misseriya population in the northern areas in Abyei. The assessment was the first to take place since 2011, given the access constraints.

23. Access remains one of the key challenges to the efficient implementation of humanitarian assistance. Besides the prolonged administrative procedures for obtaining travel permits from the Government of the Sudan to reach the Abyei area, the rainy season posed additional logistical constraints, greatly reducing the accessibility of seasonal roads, including the main road between Abyei town and Agok, where most of the non-governmental organizations are based.

24. Contingency planning is under way to ensure that inter-agency coordination arrangements, standby agreements and sufficient stocks are in place in case of new emergencies. Humanitarian planning for 2015 is also ongoing.

VI. Personnel deployment and mission support

25. As at 10 September, the UNISFA military component stood at 4,045, out of the authorized strength of 5,326 troops (annex I). Owing to the late arrival of the rains, the UNISFA rainy season deployment came into effect in mid-July. The mission's troops were redeployed in 10 operating bases, as opposed to 15 bases during the dry season (annex II). The troops conducted an average of 70 patrols per day, including 20 at night, in order to dominate the area of responsibility and address intercommunal conflict associated with the seasonal northward movement of Misseriya nomads.

26. The strength of the UNISFA police component remained at 22 out of an authorized strength of 50 police officers. In view of the failure to establish the Abyei Police Service, which UNISFA is mandated to advise and train, the remaining authorized officers were not deployed.

27. The mission's engineering work continued, but at a slower pace, owing to the rains. The upgrading of access roads between UNISFA camps and the airstrip project in Athony have been postponed until weather conditions improve. Two additional water boreholes were completed at the Banton and Highway operating bases. The mission began preparations for dry season projects, including the planned repair of approximately 130 km of supply routes and access roads to deployment locations. The procurement process was initiated for outsourcing camp services contracts, as were requests for technical clearance for the construction of hard-structure ablution units for all military camps and permanent culvert bridges in the Baloom and Goli areas.

VII. Follow-up mission to the strategic review of the Force's mandate

28. Representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, and of the United Nations Development Programme, on behalf of the United Nations Development Group, visited Abyei, Juba and Khartoum from 10 to 20 September to meet with UNISFA, non-governmental organizations and United Nations country team personnel. The visit, which was a follow-up to the recently concluded strategic review of UNISFA (see S/2014/336), was undertaken to develop proposals for operational support to the recommendations from the strategic review, in particular as they pertain to the stabilization of Abyei.

29. The team's recommendations include modalities for UNISFA support to intercommunity dialogue; United Nations country team and UNISFA support to community protection committees (community-based neighbourhood watch mechanisms) that aim to address communities' law and order needs in the absence of the Abyei Police Service; UNISFA support to the implementation of Abyei Joint Oversight Committee decisions pertaining to the establishment of a weapons-free zone throughout the Abyei area; and the adoption of measures to enhance coordination between UNISFA and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The final conclusions of the follow-up mission will be presented to the Council in my next report.

VIII. Financial aspects

30. The General Assembly, by its resolution 68/258 B, appropriated the amount of $318.9 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNISFA beyond 15 October 2014, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the amount approved by the Assembly for the 2014/15 financial period. As at 18 September 2014, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNISFA amounted to $95.6 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $3,849.2 million. Contributing Governments have been reimbursed for troop and contingent-owned equipment costs for the period up to 31 May 2014 and 31 March 2014, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IX. Observations and recommendations

31. I remain deeply concerned about the security situation in the Abyei area. While the area is seemingly calm, incidents at the community level can easily escalate into open conflict, with a commensurate risk of deterioration of bilateral relations between the Sudan and South Sudan. Moreover, the people of the Abyei communities remain bereft of basic social services and vulnerable to ethnic violence. The status quo cannot continue.

32. Moreover, UNISFA cannot implement its mandate to support the maintenance of peace and security and protect civilians in the complete absence of governance and law and order institutions. I am particularly concerned that the organization of elections in Abyei by the Government of the Sudan, in the absence of a joint administration, may lead to political tensions and security incidents. I therefore call upon the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to immediately resume political dialogue on the management of Abyei. They must, as a first step, reconvene the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee to provide political and administrative oversight to the area, contribute to making the territory weapons-free, facilitate humanitarian access and early recovery for both communities, and support initiatives fostering their peaceful coexistence and reconciliation, as decided by the Committee at previous meetings. The organization of elections by the Government of the Sudan in the Abyei area can be addressed by the Committee.

33. The presence of Sudanese armed police at the Diffra oil field constitutes a violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and Security Council resolutions. I urge the Government of the Sudan to work with UNISFA in conducting a joint assessment of the security requirements for the Diffra oil complex and developing proposals which would allow for the withdrawal of Sudanese police units while ensuring the security of those installations, in accordance with the Agreement of 20 June 2011. At the same time, the recurrent entry of armed Sudan People's Liberation Army elements into Abyei is another violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011. I call upon the Government of South Sudan to ensure that its security forces do not enter the area.

34. In order to reverse the deterioration in intercommunal relations in Abyei, it is imperative that the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka traditional leaders find closure to the issue of the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount Chief on 4 May 2013.

Mechanisms to address any future dispute between them, in particular those stemming from cattle rustling and other forms of intercommunal crime, should also be developed. I welcome the readiness of the communities to engage in dialogue on these issues and appeal to the leaders of both countries to ensure that a formal intercommunal conference begins as soon as possible and without any preconditions. Meaningful intercommunal dialogue in Abyei will require the support of the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan.

35. In its resolution 2156 (2014), the Security Council welcomed the recommendations from the strategic review and extended the Force's mandate until 15 October 2014. The recommendations from the strategic review included a number of initiatives to address the political and security needs of the disputed area, in particular through the resumption of Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meetings, intercommunal dialogue and administration by the communities under the Committee's supervision.

36. On this basis, the African Union Commission, the Government of Ethiopia, UNISFA and the Secretariat jointly engaged Sudanese and South Sudanese officials to seek an agreement on these initiatives. The objective of this engagement was not to reopen negotiations on the Abyei area. Its aim was to push for the adoption of concrete steps within the agreed framework and provisions of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 on Abyei, deemed necessary to consolidate improvements in the security situation since the deployment of UNISFA in July 2011 and reverse the current trend towards deterioration. Joint engagement on these issues will continue but needs to be sustained on the ground.

37. At the same time, there is a need to step up the facilitation of intercommunal dialogue and increase support for humanitarian assistance and the implementation of early recovery programmes. I have therefore decided to reconfigure the leadership of UNISFA and appoint a civilian as Head of Mission, separating the functions of Head of Mission and Force Commander. The Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan and the African Union Commission have been informed of this decision, which the Government of Ethiopia supports.

38. In order to provide more time for consultations with both parties, I recommend that the Security Council consider a further four-month technical rollover of the Force's mandate. During this period, the Secretariat and its partners will further engage the parties in the resumption of their cooperation on the management of Abyei, with the support of the mission. I intend to provide the Council with consolidated recommendations on future support to the Abyei area, in accordance with the Force's mandate.

39. I welcome the efforts of the parties to fully operationalize the Mechanism and the continued aerial monitoring and verification operations. In order to ensure the full establishment of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the complete and effective implementation of their security agreements, however, the Sudan and South Sudan still need to renew their efforts to resolve the outstanding dispute over the Zone centreline and its use to demarcate the proposed border crossing corridors. I welcome the recent efforts of President Mbeki and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel to facilitate dialogue between the parties in this context. I also welcome the support of the African Union Peace and Security Council and urge the parties to rapidly convene a meeting of the Joint Political Security Mechanism and address all outstanding border security issues.

40. I wish to express my appreciation to the Officer-in-Charge and acting Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Halefom Moges, and all the men and women of UNISFA for their sustained efforts to promote peace and stability in the Abyei area in what are often arduous and challenging conditions. I also commend my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkerios, President Mbeki and the Government of Ethiopia for their efforts to assist the Sudan and South Sudan in resolving the dispute over the final status of Abyei.

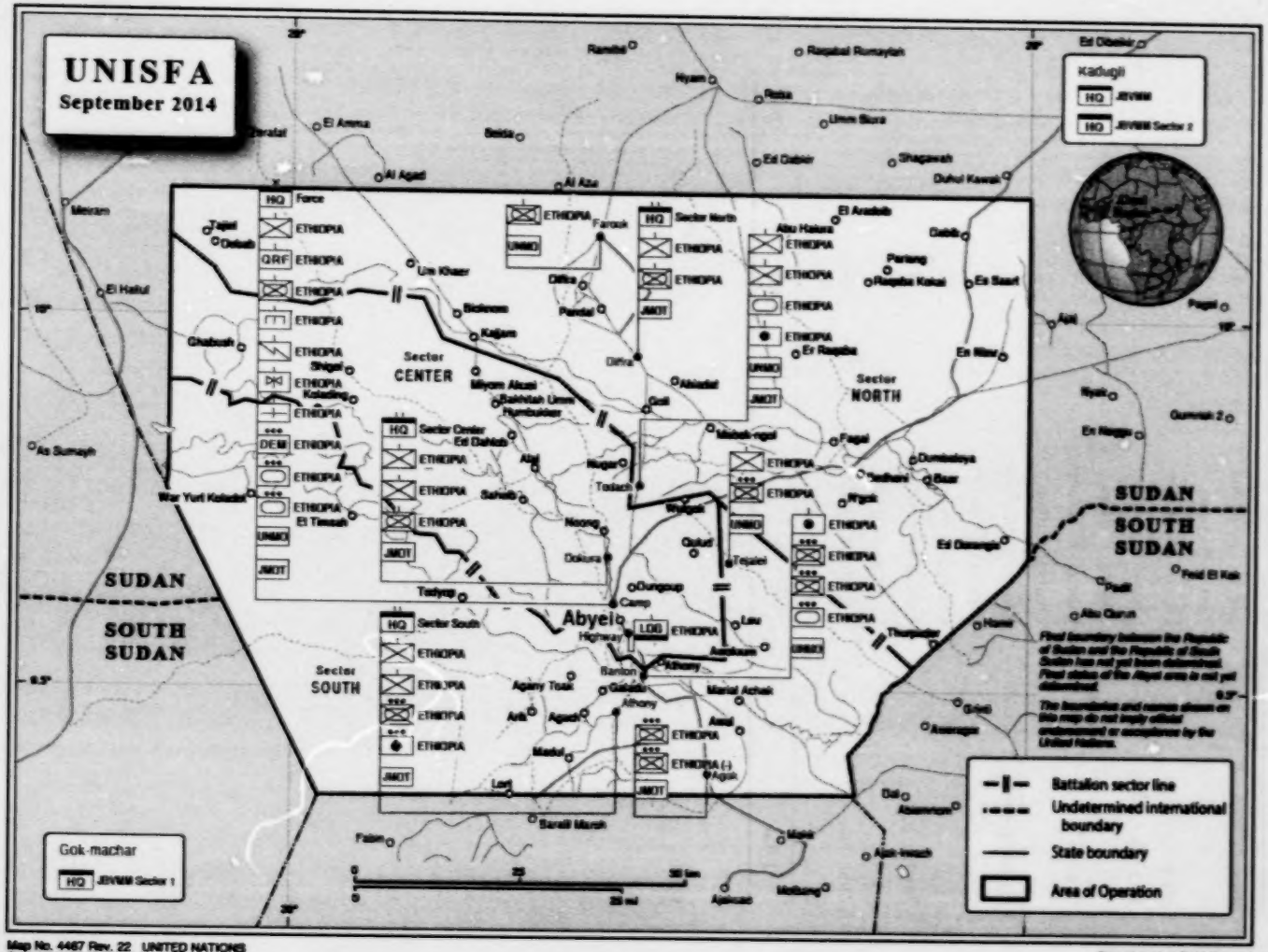
Annex I

Composition of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei military component (including the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism) as at 17 September

Country	*Description*	*Personnel*	*Total*
Benin	Experts on mission	1	2
	Contingent troop	1	
Brazil	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	
Burkina Faso	Experts on mission	1	1
Burundi	Experts on mission	1	1
Cambodia	Experts on mission	3	3
Ecuador	Experts on mission	1	2
	Contingent troop	1	
El Salvador	Experts on mission	1	1
Ethiopia	Experts on mission	78	4 004
	Contingent troop	3 926	
Ghana	Experts on mission	3	5
	Contingent troop	2	
Guatemala	Experts on mission	2	3
	Contingent troop	1	
Guinea	Experts on mission	1	1
India	Contingent troop	2	2
Indonesia	Experts on mission	2	4
	Contingent troop	2	
Kyrgyzstan	Experts on mission	1	1
Malawi	Experts on mission	1	1
Mali	Contingent troop	1	1
Mongolia	Experts on mission	2	2
Mozambique	Experts on mission	1	1
Namibia	Experts on mission	3	4
	Contingent troop	1	
Nigeria	Experts on mission	3	6
	Contingent troop	3	
Paraguay	Experts on mission	1	3
	Contingent troop	2	
Peru	Experts on mission	1	3
	Contingent troop	2	
Russian Federation	Experts on mission	1	1

Country	*Description*	*Personnel*	*Total*
Rwanda	Experts on mission	1	2
	Contingent troop	1	
Sierra Leone	Experts on mission	2	2
Sri Lanka	Experts on mission	5	6
	Contingent troop	1	
Ukraine	Experts on mission	4	6
	Contingent troop	2	
United Republic of Tanzania	Experts on mission	1	1
Yemen	Experts on mission	3	5
	Contingent troop	2	
Zambia	Experts on mission	2	3
	Contingent troop	1	
Zimbabwe	Experts on mission	2	3
	Contingent troop	1	
Total		**4 085**	**4 085**

Annex II


UNISFA
September 2014
SUDAN
SOUTH SUDAN
Abyei
Sector CENTER
Sector NORTH
Sector SOUTH
Kadugli
Gok-machar
Battalion sector line
Undetermined international boundary
State boundary
Area of Operation
Map No. 4467 Rev. 22 UNITED NATIONS
September 2014 (Colour)
Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section